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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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★ SEP 22 1942 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Wednesday, September 16, 1942

Subject: "Apples: A Victory Food Special." Information from marketing specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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September — school days -- that queer sort of tugging at the heart when the kids start back to school. Today, there's a very special reason why I am remembering my first teacher and the urge to learn the "A,B,C's". I can see that big blackboard and on it a large red apple -- "A" is for apple ..... "A" is for America too — the greatness, the bigness, — everything that goes to make up this wonderful country of ours. Now, put the two together -- Apple and America! That spells Victory Food Special! Starting tomorrow, September 17, and lasting through the next week of September 26 the United States Department of Agriculture has designated apples as the Victory Food Special.

This gives me the opportunity to tell one of the most beautiful American stories. It's the story of an American hero — not a great or a famous man, like George Washington, or Patrick Henry or Thomas Jefferson. This hero was a very simple, folksy old man. No one ever pinned any medals on him. He wore ragged looking clothes and traveled about from farm to farm all over the Northwestern Territory -- planting apple trees and giving away seed. Most people didn't even know his name so they called him "Johnny Appleseed" — but he was an American hero just the same.

John Chapman — for that was Johnny Appleseed's true name — devoted his life to two things. First, was his love of God and his fellowman — his love for this country came next, and interwined with America, was his desire to see apple trees growing on every plot of ground. Johnny Appleseed was born in New England, near Springfield, Massachusetts, probably in the year 1774. The brief facts of his

life are not recorded -- but many people remembered him after he died. Some said he was born in May so that from the very hour of his birth he had the beauty of the apple blossoms -- and their sweet perfume -- with him. Johnny's father served as a private during the American Revolution and Johnny grew up knowing the hardships of war and pioneer life. Some said that Johnny attended Harvard, even though his father was a poor man -- others, that he had little schooling. In his early manhood, Johnny took a trip with his brother to the Northwest. After the journey, he settled on the banks of the Ohio River, near Pittsburgh, where he built a home and started a nursery. The Dutch had already settled here and their apple orchards were prospering. Johnny often visited their cider presses and from the refuse he carefully washed and sorted appleseeds to plant. As the pioneers journeyed Westward, Johnny Appleseed's home became a haven. He refused abode to no one. When women and children got sick enroute, he insisted they stay at his house until they recovered. And no family left empty-handed -- for Johnny gave them saplings or apple-seeds to start orchards when they arrived at their new homes. But after a number of years, Johnny felt this was not enough. He must go to the farms carrying the seeds, and show the farmers how to plant the trees. What a strange sight this vagabond philosopher must have been! He wore a couple of rough coffee sacks, with a hole split through the center for his head. Over this, a cast-away coat. On his feet a pair of rough sandals -- sometimes, a sandal on one foot, a boot on the other. For a hat he often used his metal mushpot -- or perhaps a piece of pasteboard he had fashioned into a hat. For almost half a century -- on foot or by boat -- Johnny traveled over the Northwest on his mission -- preaching the gospel and distributing apple seeds. In spite of the bitter massacres of those days, Johnny was revered by the Indians as a great mystic. They said he talked with the birds and beasts of the forest -- and with the Great Spirit....Whenever Johnny journeyed, the plains blossomed with apple trees. He died about 1847. When the

news reached Washington, General Sam Houston, then serving in Congress, rose and said: "This old man was one of the most useful citizens of the world in his humble way. He has made a greater contribution to our civilization than we realize!

Today, one third of the world's acreage planted in apples is in the United States. We produce one-third of the world's apple crop. Much of the credit is due to that ragged old pioneer who scattered the seeds over the Northwest -- and from there, they have been carried North, East, West and South. No food is more typically American than apples -- grown in every State of the Union except Florida. Washington State ranks first in apple production and almost one-third of the entire United States crop is grown in the Northwest. The North Atlantic States, including Maine, New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, produce about one-fourth of our annual apple crop. The South Atlantic and Central States -- each, produce about one-sixth.

This year our national crop is estimated to be about 122 million bushels of apples -- that's slightly more than in 1941 but not quite up to the 5 year average. But we're going to have apples -- and apples aplenty. That's why the Department of Agriculture has listed apples as a Victory Food Special. Homemakers must remember Victory Food Specials are abundant foods -- and that our Government is asking that none of these foods be allowed to go to waste. This is especially important message for the apples now being featured are the later summer or early fall apples -- the so-called "soft" varieties. They cannot be stored away for use during the winter months but must either be eaten fresh or canned. The fresh apples on hand now are good eaten out-of-hand, or made into salads. They are excellent for apple sauce, which may be put up for the winter months, or cooked in such dishes as baked apples, apple turn-overs, apple cobblers, apple dumplings -- or just plain old-fashioned apple pie! And don't forget to serve a slice of cheese with your apple pie for extra zest.

There are many varieties of soft apples to select from depending on the part of the United States where you live. Retailers will feature favorites of their areas during this Victory Food Special. The time: September 16 through September 26.

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